

Jani Summers -

9/30/08

Comments

I am hear to voice my concerns about streamside setbacks and the committee that was commissioned to bring a final draft forward.

I have attended about 75% of the streamside setback meetings. When I first got involved they were working on about version 4. (I think) and I became alarmed about the effect that his would have on our local farmers and ranchers that rely on irrigation water and the flexibility needed for irrigating for the short season that we have. I voiced my concerns to some farmers and ranchers and also attended some irrigation companies meetings to point out my concerns. The next few meetings for SS were jam packed with concerned citizens and we were successful on getting Ag exempted out of the regulations and ditches were taken off the setback radar.

At this time I was encouraged by the willingness of the SSC to listen to the input and change the interim document to reflect these very valid concerns.

As months when on I saw a change in the majority of the SS members. They seemed to view public comment as a challenge and had an eye-rolling attitude to any suggestions.

When work began on the final regulations the input that the citizens gave to the committee was for all intent and purposes eliminated and the following occurred.  
Read A-H

With all of this happening it became very self evident the the SS sub committees were deliberating about key elements of the SS regulation without public oversight or commentary. As resolution 3000 clearly states there must be a thoroughly transparent process.

It seems to be that this document became more about envy than the enviroment, creating fear rather than about facts and finally, about petty personalities than protecting property rights!!!

In closing,

I spoke to the President of the Ravalli Farm Bureau Federation that has over 500 local members and they asked be to voice their concern about this issue also. I believe that Ken Mcpherson a board member might be in attendance.

If the SSC can not be transparent in and about their meetings as resolution 3000 clearly states ~~they~~ ask that the Ravalli County Commissioners step in and disband the current members and the work that has been done by them.

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The Ravalli Farm Bureau Federation

- When work began on the final regulations the following occurred
  - A) Less and less discussion occurred, at the monthly meeting, between committee members about topics the sub committees were deliberating .
  - B) As a result, the public was denied the opportunity to hear and see what the members were thinking about each issue, were denied the right of public oversight.
  - C) Public comment on all issues was not allowed until the end of the meeting and was limited to the subjects discussed that night. So, if you had a question about an issue other than what had been discussed, YOU were not allowed to speak.
  - D) The public has been locked out of the process for many months.
  - E) At the July meeting of the SSC, Chris Daniel, stated ~~that~~ the obvious, that the public was not informed of what was being created in the sub committees, that work was not being presented at the full meetings and that they were in violation of the resolution that created the SSC.
  - F) It is self evident that he was right because two weeks later a full document was released to the public.
  - G) If the sub committees were just having coffee and kicking a few ideas around, WHO WROTE THIS DOCUMENT? WHERE IS THE SCIENCE TO SUPPORT THIS DOCUMENT? WHY WASN'T THE PUBLIC ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE?
  - H) It is apparent to all that substantial deliberations took place to create this document. WHERE WAS THE TRANSPARENCY?